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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001283

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ELTN](#) [ETRD](#) [IZ](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY'S RENEWED INTEREST IN SECOND BORDER  
CROSSING WITH IRAQ

REFS: A. 2005 ANKARA 1214

[1](#)B. 2004 ANKARA 2560

[1](#)C. 2004 ANKARA 2983

[1](#)D. 2004 CPA BAGHDAD 444

Classified By: Ambassador for reasons 1.4 b & d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Turkish officials have renewed their calls for a second border crossing to Iraq. They have asked the USG to help persuade Iraqi officials to agree on a second border gate and inquired about the U.S. offer of 2004 to fund a TDA feasibility study of the border options. Post recommends that we work with the Turks and Iraqis to promote progress on this issue, including in conjunction with the already planned visit by TDA in March. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) MFA Under Secretary Ali Tuygan asked Ambassador Edelman March 4 about the U.S. offer of 2004 to finance a TDA feasibility study of a second border gate with Iraq. Tuygan said Turkey remained interested in the proposal but had never received an answer from the U.S. Ambassador Edelman told Tuygan that Turkish officials told us in May 2004 that Turkey was not interested in doing the study. (Note: Then MFA DG Sakir Fakili told us May 5, 2004, (ref b) that the study was unnecessary because Turkey had already done a feasibility study. He clarified the GOT position May 26 (ref c) by adding that Turkey would agree to a study but on the condition that TDA study the Turkish proposal only.)

[1](#)3. (C) On March 8, MFA DG for Economic Affairs Oguz Ozge (who assumed this position in December 2004 after a four-year post in Malaysia) told Econ Counselor that Turkey was increasingly concerned that the Habur Gate crossing to Iraq was over-burdened and could no longer handle the increasing volume of traffic. Ozge accompanied Trade Minister Tuzmen and Interior Minister Aksu, when they visited the border region on February 27. Ozge said that Ankara believes there should be "several border gates" to accommodate the expected growth of Turkish and international trade with Iraq. Unlike what Fakili told us in May, Ozge said Ankara was not wedded to a specific location. However, the GOT did not see a rationale for a plan that would result in a second gate close to the Habur Gate that used the same road through Zakho into Iraq. Ozge passed us an Aide-Memoire laying out Turkey's position. Post will e-mail a copy to EUR/SE and Embassy Baghdad. Ozge asked the U.S. to help persuade Iraqi officials to come to an agreement on a second border crossing. Ozge continued that Turkey would be happy to talk to TDA officials about a feasibility study that explores the pros and cons of several borders crossing with Iraq.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: Post recommends that we pursue Ankara's renewed interest in the TDA study. We request that TDA Regional Director for Europe and Eurasia Dan Stein be prepared to discuss this subject with Turkish officials when he visits Ankara March 26-27. Such a TDA study should evaluate several options for a second border crossing, including but not limited to the Turkish proposal. In order to proceed, it will also be necessary to gain Baghdad's approval. We suggest that Embassy Baghdad raise this subject with Iraqi interlocutors as a possible item for discussions during or on the margins of the upcoming trilateral and bilateral meetings on trucker security.

[1](#)5. Baghdad Minimize Considered.

EDELMAN